

John and Ellie Bush House
1214 3rd Avenue
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5834

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
44-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN AND ELLIE BUSH HOUSE

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Location: 1214 3rd Avenue

Date of Erection: between 1876-80

Description: Only three houses in the Fourth Ward survey area qualify as an I-house--a vernacular house form having two identical rooms separated by a central hallway. Although common in several areas of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, their scarcity in Altoona is not surprising. The I-houses's broad width is not well suited to urban house lots. The existence of this early Altoona example is, in fact, surprising in itself.

The Bush house is a two-and-one-half-story, side-gable, frame dwelling. It is one room deep and has three bays with a central entrance and an enclosed side chimney. Original horizontal wood siding survives. The cornice is decorated with paired brackets on both faces of the front corners of the building. Original ornamental window surrounds on the second floor have projecting flat-topped pediments with incised decoration. In the first floor are two extra-wide picture windows, each with a row of individual squared lights above. There are no windows in the side walls of the house.

A later porch, covering the left two-thirds of the front, has square columns supporting a front-gable roof. There is a second entrance in the asphalt-covered rear addition projecting beyond the house on the north side. The southern exterior wall is sided in asphalt as well.

History: John Bush, a brakeman, built and owned a house here in 1871, although the deed was not recorded until 1887. The present house, however, was probably not built until 1880. From 1877 to 1879 Bush was assessed only for "property" valued at \$250. By 1880 a house was listed and the assessment raised to \$325.

John Bush soon became a freight conductor, and the earliest city directories listed his address as 3rd Avenue above 12th Street. By 1886, the address of No. 1214 has been assigned to Bush. In 1917, Bush's widow Ella continued to live here.

After an initial fifty years in one family, the house saw a succession of owners. Ellie Bush and her children sold the property to Milton Papadeas on April 24, 1924, for \$3,800. Milton and Pota Papadeas resided here by 1925; Milton, along with Henry Papadeas ran Papadeas Brothers, a confectionery, at 1200 7th Ave. Through sheriff's sales the house passed via State Capital Savings and Loan to Charles R. and Mildred Ketrow in 1932. In 1939 the Ketrows resided here while Charles worked as a truck driver; John Sabatino lived in the rear of the house.

George B. Metzger, who became owner in 1943, worked as a blacksmith for the PRR and lived here with his wife Verna M. Frank P. and Catherine Schreiner acquired the property in 1955 for \$4,800. It was passed on to Edwin and Rita Howard in August 1976; they sold it to the current owner ten years later. The Schreiners and Howards both lived here during their respective ownerships.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: 31/569, 32/263, 49/140, 322/89, 406/579, 404/45, 484/25, 502/88, 714/41, 985/851, 1123/402. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5786) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also

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additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Susan Garfinkel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Garfinkel's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.